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# The Cathedral of Trees



fantasy

group

trees

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## Chapter 1 by Brother Anteris

The small group of men and women sat idly staring at the small stream before them, exhausted and weary of travel; they had been on the road for months now and it seemed as if their goals of uniting a kingdom, was much farther now than it had been at the beginning. Wordlessly the company of 10 dismounted their horses to set camp for the night, which really meant that they would unpack the items they would need, like a sleeping roll and maybe a few shared provisions from their single cart.

Some started the fire, a couple others padded through the surrounding tree line to make sure the small camp was secure while the rest tended to the horses and did whatever else needed to be done. The band worked like clockwork, moving almost in tandem with one another so before one knew it, everything that they were doing was almost done in an instance.

Night was upon them by now, the dark laced her fingers through the leaves of every tree and brush around the small camp and its single campfire, slowly closing in everytime time the heat of the flame came too low.

Tired faces of different backgrounds and races were dimly lit, each man or woman had a reason to be there, a reason to be fighting. They had been told they would find the world. But an oppressive air hung over them, like a blanketing black cloud on a hot summer day.

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"There isn't much between us and the next city," a woman piped up, the tension wasn't wanted, and she wanted to hear the voices of her companions. "We'll find the clues we need to get to the

*Cathedral*, we mustn't lose hope in that..." she paused to sip her tea. "...and hope in one another." She couldn't tell if there was any change in the others as she waited for a reply, she was one of ten. It wasn't about just her, there were 9 other voices there.

Samira sat on the ground with her legs crossed, one hand was occupied with a small metal bowl filled with tea while the other was rested under her chin; her silvery twilight hair fell over her face and almost immediately a graceful and scarred hand moved to tuck it back behind her ear. Her hand was littered with healed cuts of wounds from years before, each more old than the last. Precious gems for eyes glanced over the rim of the bowl as she sipped the rest of the tea, to see who was next to speak.

## Chapter 2 by shad0scrib3



"If you believe we're out of the woods, think again. There are Galyks around these parts," said Tamyra as she eyed the forest around them half expecting a Galyk to come storming towards them. She was sharpening her dagger in case the ferocious beast decided to make an appearance.

"And the Marefolk. Don't forget about them," added Bragon. "Wild savages," he muttered under his breath. He took a gulp of his drink as the Kahlyn triplets stared at the grotesque scar across his face. "Will you idiots look somewhere else, already!?" said an angry Bragon.

"It's hard to look anywhere else with such a large and ugly face in the way," quipped the eldest of the triplets, Kelnia. She was eldest by mere seconds but she made sure her siblings never forgot it.

Bragon grunted in anger as he stood sliding his sword from its sheath to swing it at the triplets. They easily evaded angry Bragon as they rolled backwards in separate directions. With astonishing speed they pulled out their bows and arrows to aim. Bragon had no choice but to yield.

"Enough!" Shouted Envra. "Save it for the enemy!" She grinned her axe as she came between

them to discourage the bickering. They all respected Envra.

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"I want an apology!" grunted Envra.

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"We're sorry" said Jerys, one of the triplets.

“...that you have a horrendous face,” finished the youngest of the three, Kys.

They erupted in laughter. Bragon roared and lifted his blade. Before things could escalate further there was a sudden shrieking howl in the distance. It was a Galyk. Everyone instinctively positioned themselves in battle formation. The shrill echoed, bouncing off the trees surrounding them on all sides.

Wes, the Scout from Alygrad, fearlessly entered the woods and was quickly swallowed by the darkness. They would soon know how far away the Galyks were, that is, if Wes returned alive to report it.

A few minutes passed and they relaxed slightly to conserve energy, keeping a vigilant eye on the woods while they waited for Wes. Their thoughts were somberly dwelling on their mission and on surviving the night.

Quill, the Mygonian, set his spear down to tend the fire with Tamyra who only had one eye. He glanced at Samira who was trying to find her satchel. She had lost it in all the commotion.

“And you thought there wasn't going to be much between us and the next city. You’re too hopeful child,” said Quill.

“Or afraid,” added Tamyra. “Sometimes hope is just fear wearing a fancy cloak.”

“I’m not afraid,” snapped Samira. She was eager to prove herself to the band of seasoned warriors. Unfortunately, the harder she tried the more annoying she became to them. Except for Enyra. She was always kind to her.

“Someone’s coming!” shouted Kys, her arrow following the dark figure approaching in the distance.

The figure drew closer and they sighed with relief upon seeing that it was only Wes returning from scouting the forest. Their relief was short lived, however, when they noticed he was

wobbling and grabbing his stomach in pain.

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They all ran out to him. Enyra caught him in a warm embrace. He wanted to speak but struggled to get the words out. Tamyra began to ready herself to ease his pain and mend his wounds with her

collection of medicines but she froze upon seeing his stomach.

"He won't make it," she whispered. "Those are not Galyk wounds. They're something else." Everyone looked at each other with unease.

Wes suddenly grabbed hold of Enyra and locking eyes with her he uttered, with a final breath, a single word that ran an ice cold tremor down everyone's spine.

"Run."

### Chapter 3 by



Simultaneously, the group stood up and threw their necessities into their cart. They cut the horses' ropes and jumped on them, riding away from the forest.

All except Enyra.

Bragon looks toward Enyra. "We have to go!" Behind Enyra, he sees What Wes had been talking about.

Nothing.

Bragon saw nothing behind the pair. Confused, he got off his horse and quickly ran to Enyra and Wes.

"We need to go!" Bragon yelled again, this time louder.

Startled by the sound Enyra looked up from Wes and realized the situation. She dropped Wes, got on her horse, and rode back to the group.

When she finally caught up with them, Bragon could see tears in her eyes.

"What's wrong?" He asked, putting his hand on her back.

Enyra looked away, shrugging his hand off. "Nothing." She looked back at the campsite, dried tears streaking her face, where Wes probably lay, dead.

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